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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

Haiti: No Present, No Future

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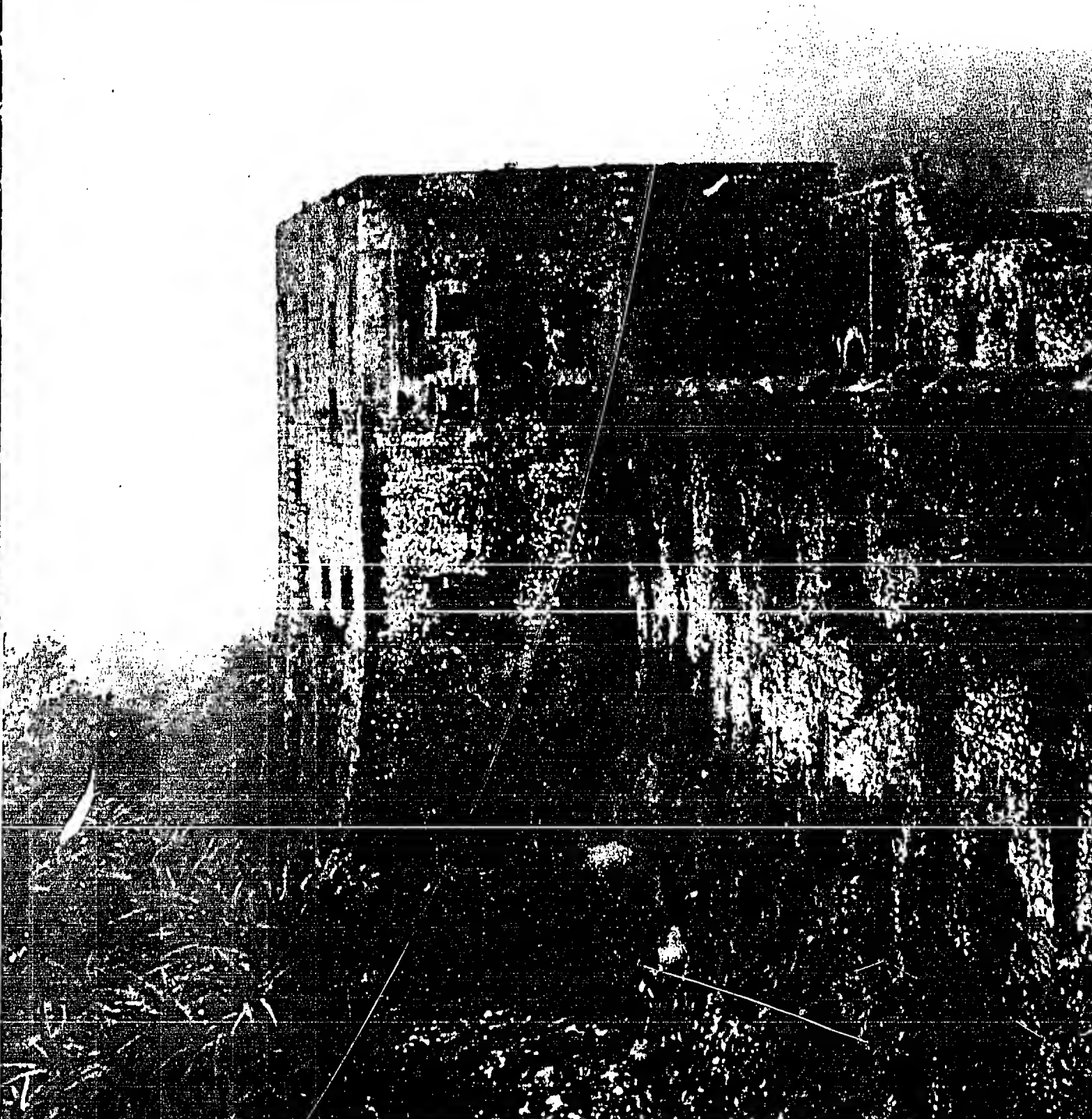
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HAITI: NO PRESENT, NO FUTURE

For the past 13 years President Francois Duvalier has ruled Haiti despotically. He personally handles all major administrative matters. The country lacks effective institutions; it is devoid of the leadership and trained personnel that could provide government services and continuity. Duvalier suffered a protracted illness last year and his health may be gradually weakening. A sudden termination of his brutal dictatorship—either through his death or overthrow—would produce turmoil.



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On April 24-25 1970, Coast Guard commandant Octave Cayard, who was supposedly loyal to Duvalier, led a futile rebellion following the arrests of several military and civilian figures for alleged coup plotting. The failure of the mutiny probably will discourage other military leaders from moving against the regime in the immediate future. Contingency planning will continue, however, and a rapid deterioration in Duvalier's mental or physical powers could inspire a palace coup.

The extent of turmoil that will follow Duvalier's disappearance from the scene will depend on the ability of his would-be heirs to consolidate power. Available evidence suggests that when change does come, the succession will be controlled by the individual leaders of one or more of the security forces—the army, civil militia, and secret police. They are in the strongest position to act because they are armed and organized, and because their men in the palace will be among the first to know if something happens to Duvalier.

No matter who succeeds Duvalier, Haiti's troubles are not likely to be relieved. The country lacks not only modern government institutions, but also labor organizations, professional associations, and a responsible press. In short, society is as lacking in effective structures as the government itself.

Background

Since Haitian independence in 1804, only five of the 33 presidents have completed their terms of office—three of these during the occupation by US Marines (1915-1934). Violence, intimidation, and dictatorship have been constants of political life. With few exceptions, those who have acquired power have felt no responsibility as public servants but have sought to grasp power permanently while enriching themselves at public expense. Consequently the pitifully poor masses have remained illiterate, superstitious, and apathetic.

The government of Francois Duvalier fits the pattern. Since his accession to power in 1957, he has crushed all sources of internal opposition, including the Communists. He has purged and divided the army, cowed the Roman Catholic church, and subjugated all government organizations to his personal whim. His fanatic concern with political security and his indifference to economic problems have stifled government



President Francois Duvalier

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programs for economic development. As a result, the standard of living of the Haitian people has deteriorated steadily. Estimated per capita gross national product has dwindled to about \$100.00, less than 20 percent of the Latin American average. Exports of the principal agricultural product (coffee) have declined. The government has chronic budget deficits and often does not pay its official debts.

Duvalier began his rule by weakening the military leadership, which had played a dominant role in almost every change of government since independence. He systematically purged all competent officers who might oppose him—including the mulattoes who initially made up the majority of the officer corps—and replaced them with his own creatures. On one occasion, for example, he sacked a dynamic, well-trained commander in Cap Haitien who had gained the respect of the people in his department, in favor of a dissolute non-entirely capable of neither action nor betrayal.

He also undercut military authority by creating two counterforces, the National Security Volunteer Corps (VSN) popularly known as the civil militia, and a loosely structured investigative unit known as the "Service Duvalier." Until this year the 5,000-7,000-man militia was maintained in a parallel but separate status from the regular armed forces. Recently, however, Duvalier announced that vacancies within the military ranks would be filled by militiamen. It is not clear whether he plans a complete reorganization or simply a token integration of these forces, but his actions probably will have little effect on national security. The militia is not organized, equipped, or trained for major military operations. It has never defeated an invading group with its own resources, but it has assisted the army in patrol and mop-up operations. Only one militia commander, Zacharie Delva, has demonstrated unusual competence as the chief VSN trouble-shooter for Duvalier.

Although Haiti spends more proportionately on defense (approximately 23 percent of the

budget) than other Latin American countries, its only effective military units are located in Port-au-Prince. These include the Presidential Guard of 400 men, the Dessalines Battalion with 800 men, and the Port-au-Prince police with about 800 men. The capability of these organizations, which are directly under the command and supervision of the President, contrasts sharply with that of the remainder of the army, totaling about 5,000 men, most of whom are untrained and poorly armed.

Duvalier's Power Base

The "Service Duvalier," which consists of a handful of Duvalier's favorites, is not a secret police organization in the conventional sense. During the mid-60s, when it was headed by Elois Maitre and Luc Desir, it did acquire a sinister reputation, but now its responsibilities consist of interrogating political prisoners and fulfilling



Minister of Finance Clovis Desnor

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occasional investigative tasks for the President. With Elois Maitre in disfavor at the Palace, the Service Duvalier is nominally led by Luc Desir, but it seems to have little if anything to do. Recently Duvalier created a special staff consisting of four cronies, including his personal physician and Legislative Deputy Luckner Cambronne, to investigate the abortive coup attempt of 24-25 April 1970. Cambronne and Finance Minister Clovis Desinor appear to be the most powerful civilian Ton Ton Macoutes in the government.



Duvalier supporters march through Port-au-Prince following abortive Coast Guard revolt in April.

The Ton Ton Macoutes (Creole for "uncle boogeymen") are a name for active Duvalier supporters who receive special favors from the President and have been given carte blanche to do as they wish without fear of interference from or punishment by civil or military authorities. The most feared group in Haiti, they belong to no organization and include cabinet members as well as ordinary thugs and taxi drivers. They can best be described as a legalized Mafia whose sole mission is to maintain Duvalier in power.

Duvalier has erected a facade of constitutionality around his regime. The legislature and the judiciary, however, like all other organizations and groups, are directly subservient to the Presi-

dent. The Constitution of 1964, which designated Duvalier "President for Life," contains no provision for succession. All political parties except Duvalier's Party of National Unity (PUN) have been suppressed, and PUN exists in name only, lacking even a paper organization.

Rivalries

No one within the government has the strength to challenge Duvalier. Individual members of the President's family, however, have exercised some authority at various times. During the past year personal rivalries within the President's family have resulted in the fall of individuals who once wielded power in the Haitian Government. In December 1968 Duvalier's oldest and reportedly his favorite daughter, Marie Denise, returned to Haiti as private secretary to her father, displacing Madame Yvon St. Victor, a one-time presidential intimate and sister of Luc Foucard, Duvalier's ex-son-in-law. Marie was soon joined in Port-au-Prince by her husband, Max Dominique, who in 1967 had been sentenced to death for treason by a Military Tribunal and had gone into exile in Spain. Dominique, a former member of the Presidential Guard, was officially reinstated and appointed ambassador to France. Madame St. Victor, Luc Foucard, and Elois Maitre, former chief of the Secret Service (reportedly an enemy of Max Dominique), have lost the influence they once had.

Economic Conditions

The standard of living in Haiti, long the lowest in the Western Hemisphere, has become still worse under Duvalier. It is said that Haiti's gross national product is less now than it was at the time of independence. The economic problems resulting from declining agricultural production and only a limited growth in the small manufacturing sector are too basic and severe for any quick solution. Yet Duvalier, instead of adopting constructive measures, has consistently ignored the recommendations of international financial organizations to eliminate corruption

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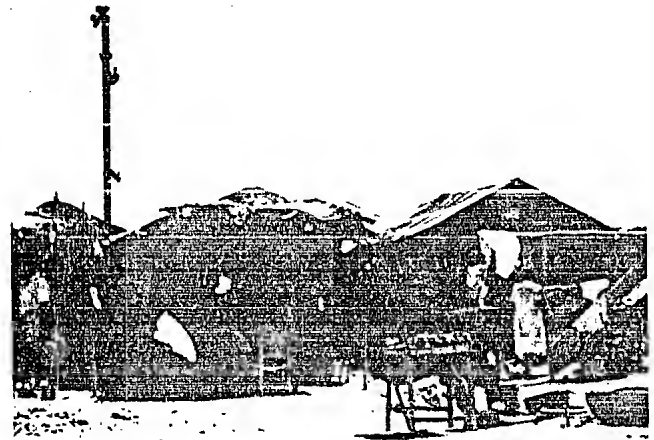
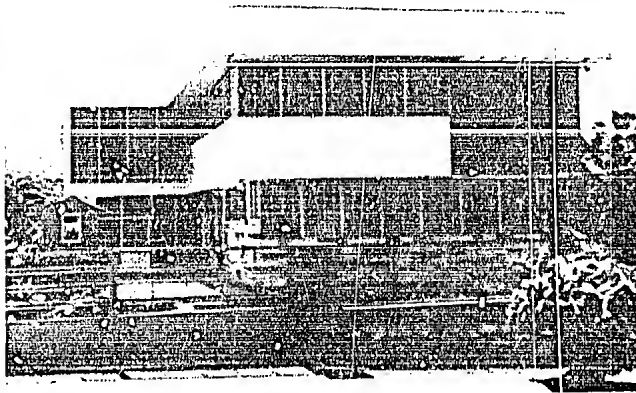
and implement fiscal and administrative reform. Despite continuing pressure from the International Monetary Fund, Duvalier has refused to make a public accounting of the financial operations of the State Monopoly (Regie du Tabac). Its revenues, estimated at \$10-12 million per year, are used to support his security apparatus and regime favorites. Because of his unwillingness to cooperate with international lending agencies, Duvalier has been denied the benefits of external assistance programs large enough to slow the economic and social deterioration.

Since 1963, when the US suspended most forms of direct aid to Haiti, assistance has been limited to a few humanitarian projects (principally malaria eradication and food distribution programs), whose funds are channeled through multilateral or private charitable institutions. Haiti currently receives \$3-4 million annually in assistance from the US and is drawing disbursements from the \$7.2-million loan granted by the Inter-American Development Bank. Haiti has given no indication that it would utilize this financial assistance to alleviate its basic economic problems, however.

Opposition

After 13 years of absolute rule over a largely illiterate society, Duvalier appears to have convinced most people in Haiti that they are benefiting from his rule even though by all objective standards they are not. The few politically sophisticated Haitians remaining in the country probably are opposed to Duvalier and his methods, but they are intimidated and disorganized. The masses, who have displayed a remarkable endurance for suffering, will not easily be shaken out of their apathy.

The opposition to Duvalier includes both Communist and scattered non-Communist groups, all of which have met devastating reprisals after any overtly hostile move. A number of exile groups located in the United States, Canada, Western Europe, the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, and Venezuela provide active opposition of sorts. But the exiles are divided, poorly armed, and for the most part untrained. Individual emigrés enjoy almost no following within Haiti, with the possible exception of former president Paul Magloire. Magloire is a



Luxurious summer home outside the capital as contrasted with slums in Port-au-Prince.

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financial mainstay of the Haitian Coalition, which has between 200 and 300 members and is headquartered in New York. It is the largest of the exile groups, but its activity has been declining, and at the moment it appears moribund.

It is doubtful that any of the small exile organizations could become a serious threat to Duvalier without decisive help from a foreign government. Military units from Port-au-Prince so far have defeated all exile incursions, probably because the exiles were poorly led and lacked motivation and adequate support, and because the average Haitian just is not interested in revolution. The most recent exile attempts against Duvalier occurred in June 1969 when ex-Haitian Army Colonel Rene Leon led ten men in an inept bombing attack on the National Palace, doing minimal damage, and in January 1970 when two small exile forays from the Dominican Republic fizzled.

Inside the country only the Communists have demonstrated a capability for sustained, though feeble, subversive activity. In December 1968 two minuscule parties, the United Haitian Democratic Party and the Party of Popular Accord, merged to form the United Party of Haitian Communists (PUCH). After the merger there was a definite increase in terrorist activity, although it did not represent a threat to Duvalier. Following some bombing attempts and the seizure of a few small villages, a number of people who had been to Communist countries were arrested. The government then picked up more than 100 persons, including several leaders of the PUCH, for subversive activities. The crackdown left the party in a shambles, and there has been little militant activity since mid-1969. Apparently the party is undergoing a period of retrenchment and consolidation.

Although Duvalier's public position has been consistently hard-line anti-Communist, his actions have been highly pragmatic. Despite the recent crackdown on Communist activities, a number of intellectuals often reputed to be Communist

oriented have been closely associated with Duvalier throughout his tenure. The government will arrest anyone possessing Communist propaganda leaflets, but Communist books and magazines are sold openly in Port-au-Prince bookstores. Duvalier also continues to tolerate the Polish Commercial Mission despite the low level of trade between the two countries and reports that the mission has served as a channel for funds and communications between the PUCH and Communist parties in Cuba and the Soviet Union.

These two countries provide what little outside assistance the Haitian Communists receive. In the past, both countries have given instruction in Marxist doctrine and guerrilla warfare to selected exiles, and Cuba reportedly gave approximately \$70,000 to PUCH through the Polish Mission in 1969.

Radio Havana continues to broadcast in Creole and French 14 hours a week, but there is no evidence that the programs—which condemn Duvalier and the support he is alleged to receive from the United States—have any significant effect on the Haitian people. Broadcasts from both Havana and Moscow play heavily on the theme of armed revolution as the only solution for Haiti.

Recent Developments

Duvalier probably will die in office rather than step down voluntarily. Although at 63 he is still an undisputed dictator, he probably has had two serious heart attacks, the most recent in May 1969. He apparently was incapacitated for several weeks, but he now seems to be functioning as effectively as before.

During May and June 1969 plans reportedly were made by some military officers to establish a junta immediately upon Duvalier's death. There is no certainty as to the extent of plotting and political maneuvering that took place at that

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Octave Cazard, former commandant of the Coast Guard and leader of abortive mutiny in 1970

time, but in April 1970 several people were arrested, including army Quartermaster General Colonel Kesner Blain. Following Blain's arrest, Coast Guard commandant Colonel Octave Cayard, who reportedly had been involved with Blain in the contingency planning, led about a third of his men in an attempted coup on 24-25 April. For two days three cutters tried to bombard the national palace, but did little damage. The mutiny, which failed to attract army support, quickly ended, and Cayard fled to the US naval base at Guantanamo, Cuba.

Since the abortive rebellion, President Duvalier has moved to prevent further dissension within the Haitian armed forces. Although none of the tactical ground units in Port-au-Prince participated in the insurrection, Duvalier has evinced his displeasure with the failure of the police to ferret out alleged conspirators. Several officers reportedly have been arrested, and last month the government created a new position of deputy chief of police for Colonel Frank Romain, who

had earned Duvalier's confidence by routing exiles' invasions in 1964 and 1968.

During the past year Duvalier also renewed his efforts to Haitianize the Catholic Church. Although the church as an institution is less influential in Haiti than in most other Latin American countries and has remained generally aloof from any active political or social action, about 60 percent of its clergy are of foreign origin. Since 1957 Duvalier has forced the church to conform to his political objectives. In 1960 he forcibly expelled the French archbishop of Port-au-Prince from the country on apparently trumped-up charges that he had been involved in student protests against the government; in 1964 he ordered the Jesuits to depart. Nevertheless, a ban of excommunication on Duvalier was lifted in August 1966 when, for the first time, a native Haitian was appointed archbishop of Port-au-Prince. The rapprochement, on Duvalier's terms, signified an acceptance on the part of the Vatican that there was no alternative to Duvalier.

In spite of this normalization of relations, Duvalier has continued to persecute foreign clergy. In September 1969 all members of the Order of the Holy Ghost, only one of whom was a native Haitian, were accused of collaborating with Communists and forced to leave the country. These priests, who operated the College of St. Martial, had been collaborating with suspect elements and were active in promoting discussion and study groups among young Haitians. The church continues to play an important role in education by providing instruction to between one third and one half of the children who attend school in Haiti. Educational policy guidelines, however, are established by the government; the church schools must conform or risk retribution.

Although 75-80 percent of the population is ostensibly Roman Catholic, voodoo continues to exert influence in almost all spheres of Haitian life. Consequently Duvalier has capitalized on the ignorance and superstition of his subjects for his own political advantage. He regularly compares

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himself to the ancient leaders of Haiti, as well as to such noted Americans as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, often going so far as to imply that he is their reincarnation.

Conclusions

As long as Duvalier rules, Haiti will remain a one-man dictatorship of the most extreme variety. His passing, however, probably will not affect the lives of most Haitians. Present indications are that there will not be a blood bath, as

the struggle for power probably will be restricted to those who exercise some authority over the command structure and have access to military hardware. The army probably will be in the forefront of the successor movement, but none of the key personnel has demonstrated any special leadership capabilities, and it would be sheer speculation to designate anyone as a probable heir-apparent. It is conceivable that the military would be content with an administrative role and turn to someone outside their ranks to serve as President.

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